GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1630
ANSWERED ON:03.08.2005
VISUALLY IMPAIRED CHILDREN
Manoj Dr. K.S.

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware of the fact that three out of five children in the age group of 0-9 years are visually impaired as per the census report 2001;

(b) if so, the details of the report ; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government in this regard ?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE (SMT. PANABAKA LAKSHMI)

(a)&(b): According to 2001 Census the number of disabled in the country is 21.9 million, which is about 2.13 per cent of the total population. When the figure is disaggregated by the type of disability, 1.03 per cent of the population at the national level has been reported as visually impaired, out of which 0.7 per cent are visually disabled between age group of 0-9 years.

(c): Under the National Programme for Control of Blindness, the following steps have been taken to reduce visual impairment in children in the country:-

1. Screening of school children for detection of refractive errors and providing free glasses to poor children.

2. Strengthening of Regional Institutes of Ophthalmology by providing assistance for development of paediatric eye units/low vision units/retina units and training infrastructure.

3. Strengthening of Medical Colleges by providing assistance for development of paediatric eye units/low vision units/retina units.

4. Imparting training to Ophthalmic Surgeons from Government Hospitals/Medical Colleges in various specialties of ophthalmology including paediatric ophthalmology.